Impact of shortage of containers

1025. SHRIMATI N. P. DURGA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that non-availability of adequate containers and their detention by the customers have hit India's exporting community and ship agents; and

(b) if so, its impact on exports during the last three years, year-wise due to non-availability of containers in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) Non-availability of an adequate number of containers have affected India's exports in September and October, 2004 to a certain extent. The impact of non-availability of an adequate number of containers on exports is not quantifiable.

Free Trade Agreement

1026. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
SHRI B. J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have signed Free Trade Agreements with ASEAN and Africa in addition to Thailand; and

(b) if so, the details of this FTA policy and the benefits that would accrue both to the Centre and the States to boost their exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) While the Government has signed a Framework Agreement aiming at a Free Trade Area within a fixed timeframe with ASEAN and Thailand, no Free Trade Agreement has been signed with Africa.

(b) The Framework Agreements provide for establishment of a Free Trade Area in goods, services and investment as well as economic cooperation in identified areas. Preferential market access would be made available to the exporters of the signatory parties and it is expected that